

Compliments of
Walter Wyman,
Surgeon-General, M-H.S.

Report of the Committee on International Quarantine adopted by the Pan-American Medical Congress, held in the City of Mexico, November 16 to 19, 1896.



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CITY OF MEXICO, November 18, 1896.

To the President and Members of the Pan-American Medical Congress.

SIRS: The committee appointed upon international quarantine have the honor to report that in the prosecution of the work imposed upon them they have carefully examined and considered the quarantine provisions embraced in the findings of the international sanitary conventions held at Rio Janeiro in 1887 and at Lima, Peru, in 1889, and the report of the committee on sanitary regulations in the international American conference held in Washington, D. C., in 1890. They have also examined the provisions of the quarantine law passed by the Congress of the United States in 1893 and the regulations made thereunder to be observed in foreign ports with regard to vessels bound to the United States, and the regulations to be observed while at sea and upon arrival at the port of destination.

The results also of the several European conferences, so far as they relate to maritime quarantine and have a practical bearing upon the subject in relation to the western hemisphere, have been duly considered in the preparation of the regulations herein mentioned.

The conclusions of the committee with regard to maritime quarantine are as follows:

1. Each nation should enact quarantine laws and

maintain quarantine stations for its own protection. In protecting itself it protects the others.

2. Quarantine operations should have their initium at the port of departure.

To this end, each nation should require of every vessel leaving a foreign port and bound to one of its own ports a bill of health signed by its own consul and certifying that all requirements or regulations necessary to insure a sanitary condition of the vessel, cargo, and passengers have been complied with.

The consular bill of health should contain all possible sanitary information regarding the port of departure and the territory connected therewith. This information should include a statement regarding the prevalence or non-prevalence of contagious diseases, the various diseases being arranged on the bill of health in tabulated form and an entry made against each.

There should be a requirement forbidding a blank report concerning any of the diseases so tabulated. The consul should be aided in furnishing the information required by a sanitary representative of the government having the port jurisdiction, as provided for hereafter.

The regulations of the Treasury Department of the United States, a copy of which is submitted herewith, are recommended as a basis for all regulations to be observed in foreign ports.

3. Each government should maintain quarantine stations in its domestic ports. Quarantine stations should be of two descriptions:

(a) Inspection stations.

(b) Refuge stations.

(a) *Inspection Stations*.—All ports of entry should be provided with inspection stations, where inspection of vessels from all foreign ports and inspection of vessels from infected domestic ports should be required. These inspections should be required throughout the entire year.

(b) *Refuge stations* are stations provided with a lazaretto for the treatment of the sick with contagious dis-

ease; a hospital for the treatment of non-contagious or doubtful cases; a detention house for the accommodation of those who have been exposed and are held under observation; and apparatus for the disinfection of the vessel, cargo, wearing apparel, and other dunnage. The quarantine regulations of the Treasury Department of the United States, to be observed at domestic ports, a copy of which is attached, are recommended as minimum requirements, special provisions to be added as may be deemed to be necessary on account of special conditions.

Refuge stations should be sufficient in number and conveniently located to accommodate without undue loss of time the vessels remanded thereto.

4. Vessels arriving at an inspection station and requiring sanitary treatment should be remanded to the nearest refuge station.

5. The treatment required of vessels arriving at domestic ports being dependent in large measure upon the sanitary information included in the bill of health, it is the duty of each government to give full and free information to the consul at the port of departure; and to this end each government should appoint a properly qualified physician whose duty it should be to furnish on request of the foreign consuls the exact information necessary to comply with the requirements of the bill of health, and also from time to time such additional sanitary information concerning the harbor, shipping, port, and surrounding territory as may be of value or interest to the sanitary authorities of other governments.

6. Each government shall obligate itself to transmit to any other government making request therefor, through the proper official channels, the name of the physician appointed or detailed for the above-named service at any port mentioned in the request, and the compensation of said physician shall be paid by his own government.

In making the foregoing recommendations the committee have had in view measures of the most practical character and have sought to avoid suggestions which

might, theoretically, answer the demands of international quarantine, yet, practically, become inoperative.

To those who have had practical administrative experience it is plain that in any scheme presented liability to error and an inclination to shift responsibility must be taken into account; therefore, so far as possible, there should be no division of responsibility.

Again, quarantine is essentially a defense to be maintained by each individual nation, and no international plan is feasible which will infringe in the slightest degree upon the sovereignty of any nation. International quarantine stations, for example, to be operated jointly by the several governments, are as impracticable as would be international forts or ships of war. Therefore, in the foregoing report, the responsibility is fixed definitely upon the agent of the government to be protected, whether the measures are enforced in domestic or in foreign ports.

But there are two distinctively international agreements suggested. The first is that each government will protect itself by adequate quarantine establishments and regulations in its own ports, and by assurance of perfect sanitary condition of vessel, cargo, and passengers at the port of departure, to which its own consul should certify. It may seem strange that governments are thus importuned to protect themselves, but an examination of the quarantine practice on the American continent shows that adequate precautionary measures are not always taken, and when the intimate commercial relations between all ports are considered and the history of the infection of one port from another, this provision seems to be a necessary one.

The second international agreement suggested is one that will insure to the consuls in the several ports the accurate knowledge necessary to enable them to take the required sanitary precautions and to inscribe on the bill of health the statistical information regarding contagious diseases which is so important to the quarantine officers at the port of arrival.

The information is to be given by a duly accredited medical officer, in accordance with instructions from his government, and hence becomes official, and the medical officer is relieved of the heartless censure visited on those who give voluntary information of this character. In the plan suggested, if accurate knowledge is desired with regard to one, or several, or all ports in a given country, it is only necessary that request through the proper sanitary and diplomatic channels be made for the appointment of a medical officer in the ports named who shall furnish the required information.

Many United States consuls have reported upon the difficulty and, in some cases, the impossibility of obtaining the facts. In some instances they are only obtained by purchase, for which no fund is provided, and in others they have been obtained by unwilling and ungracious assent. This agreement, if carried out, will remove these difficulties, and the medical officers thus appointed will together constitute a corps of international health officers through whom it may be possible ultimately to establish an international sanitary union.

The object of modern scientific quarantine is twofold: First, to combat contagious disease, and second, to remove unnecessary restrictions upon commerce. The first appeals to the people at large; the second appeals to the great shipping and commercial industries. We have thus two powerful levers with which to move the apathy or indifference of nations in this regard, and both levers should be used.

Sentiment does not enter into the ordinary consideration of quarantine, yet your committee can not refrain from expressing the hope that an international sentiment will be awakened with regard to sanitation of seaport cities and their harbors, so that a perpetually infected seaport will be regarded as an unnecessary menace to other countries and an intolerable obstruction to commerce; and that, yielding to this sentiment, the various governments will remove conditions which subject them to international opprobrium, that trade

may go on unfettered and friendly intercourse be maintained without danger to human life.

[Signed.] { WALTER WYMAN, M. D., *Chairman*, Wash-
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